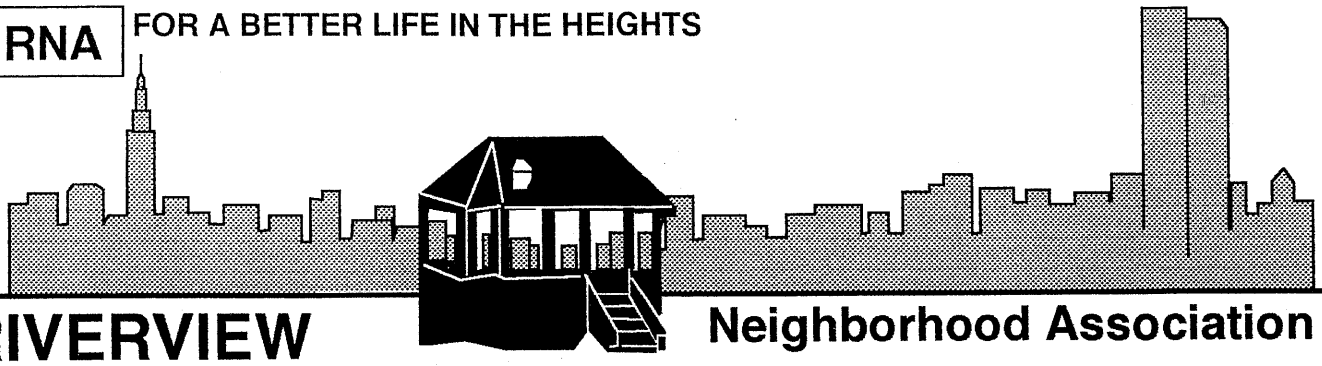
RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS



RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

SEPTEMBER 1990

232 Ogden Avenue - Jersey City, N.J. 07307 - (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

WELCOME BACK : SEE YOU AT OUR NEXT MEETING

The summer of 1990 is drawing to a close and RNA is gearing up for another full year of activities. The organization has been working and holding it regular meetings throughout the months of June, July, and August discussing a variety of important subjects. These included the success of our six annual flea market, the renovation plans for RiverviewPark, the crime and sanitation problems on Palisade Avenue, problems with our local mail delivery, the reopening of Mountain Road and most recently, the zoning variance for the new owners of 210 Ogden Avenue. There are articles and updates in this month's newsletter about these and many other community concerns. So, Riverview Neighborhood Association hopes all our friends, neighbors and members had a good, restful summer and we would like to welcome you to our next meeting on September 11, to continue working to make this neighborhood a better, safer, cleaner place to live.

One word, before we begin: it should not be necessary, but sometimes it is good to remind ourselves that this is a neighborhood organization that repects all opinions and listens to all sides of an issue before an important decision is reached. RNA tries not to condemn or alienate anybody or disregard any point of view. The two principles that guide all our actions are to improve the quality of our lives and to preserve the character of our residential neighborhood.

MEETING MINUTES:

JUNE 12:

The June general meeting of RNA was to have been a celebration of our successful annual flea market. Unfortunately, bad weather and the rescheduling of the event to the next weekend, prevented this from happening. Instead we used the extra time to doublecheck ourselves and all the arrangements for the flea market.

After the updates of some important subjects were discussed, i.e., drugs in our neighborhood and garbage in our streets; we shared refreshments and adjourned early.

JULY 10:

The July meeting was the delayed celebration of our success with this year's flea market (see article on Flea Market) and a visit from Ward D Councilman Dan Waddleton. Mr. Waddleton was in attendance to let the members know what he was doing to help alleviate the terrible drug problems especially on Palisade Ave. between Franklin and Bowers Street. Many residents and business people attended this meeting because they are in the middle of the problem area. Efforts to get owners, tenants and businessmen to clean up their property are also being looked into by city officials.

Other items discussed were Teen Nation, the proposed Hoboken gasification/sewerage treatment plant, and a bus trip for RNA members. We also voted to make two monetary contributions to causes of interest to us: one to the attorney representing the community in the Teen Nation disco issue and the other, to the Coalition for a Better Waterfront for its successful campaign against the proposed P.A. waterfront project in Hoboken. We got an update on our membership in the Heights Coalition, and started discussions on the revised plans for the renovation of Riverview Park which were to continue during August and September. Afterwards we enjoyed refreshments.

AUGUST 14:

The August meeting was as hot inside as outside. Our guest speakers were three representatives of the Post Office including Mr. Cain, supervisor of the Hudson City Station and Mrs. Jones, head of Customer Relations at the Main Office at Montgomery

COMING EVENTS

1) RNA MEETING:

TUESDAY, September 11 at7:30 PM

AT THE HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER

2) PLANNING BOARD MEETING:

TUESDAY, September 18 at 5:00 PM

CITY HALL: RENOVATION PLANS FOR RIVERVIEW PARK

Street.

These guests were invited to our meeting to give us some answers regarding the poor performance of our local mail carriers, i.e., late deliveries, incorrect deliveries, delays in bulk rate and sale dated materials, etc. There were many complaints from RNA members about the current rash of lost or stolen items given in to the Post Office care for delivery. While our guests answered our questions, I'm not sure all these answers were to our satisfaction. We will be keeping a line of communication open to these people, and hope to have better results with our mail deliveries in the future.

Other items on the agenda were the proposed Park renovation, an issue so clouded and divided that a special meeting to vote for the proposals was set up for August 28th.

In September, two other issues will also be voted upon, moving our regular meeting date from Tuesday to Friday and whether to support or oppose the variance being requested by a prospective buyer for the property at 210 Ogden.

Some other items updated were reiterating our request to the City to open Mountain Road, the drug traffic in our area and the garbage in our streets, the selection of our association as treasurer of the Heights Coalition in their recent lottery drawing of officers, and a proposed bus trip to Atlantic City.

As always, we are on top of the pressing issues. Won't you join us at the next meeting on September 11, 1990.

RNA'S 6TH ANNUAL FLEA MARKET

For the first time in our history, we had to use the rain date for our annual flea market. The original date scheduled was June 9th but poor weather forced the events' postponement until the following week, June 16th.

Our Chair-person for 1990 was Gert Bogdan and along with a dozen or so volunteers, she did a fantastic job. We had the most dealers ever, sold out our refreshments and turned the most profit since our inception.

We appreciate the cooperation that we received from all the city agencies involved in setting up an event such as this, the generosity of Mr. G, Manager of the A & P, Father Galdon, pastor of St. Nicholas Church, Rev. Claus Hinden, head of the Trinity Baptist Church for supplies and tables.

Thanks also to our members who donated items for sale, gave baked or cooked products, and most of all, gave their time. Their efforts are responsible for our huge success. These people deserve a big hand: Jack Rea, Valerie Rea, Ruth Conrad, Kathy Brennan, Dennis Elgrim, Frank Sweeney, Janet Rogaty, Carin Lewis, Bob Lewis, Ernie Quintero, Dolly Quinton, Tom Moloughney, Bill Kantaras, Kathy Dellaglio, Cosmo Sasso, Vito Brunetti, Rose Rea, Dominick Rea, Maria Tuzzo, Rose Scalzo, Margaret McCorry, Susan Lesh, David Bland, Kay Chimento, Anne Hart. And to any one else who we forgot to mention, thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Thanks to non members who made the day special: Tony Scarpa, the magician, Tom Killeen and Roll-off the recycling dog from the Incinerator Authority, the Police Department's Explorers Club for fingerprinting, Jean & Andy Brunetti and, especially, Fred Bogdan for signs, transportation and all his help and patience.

MARBLE CUTTING SHOP PROPOSED FOR 110 OGDEN AVENUE

At the August 14th RNA meeting, a proposed industrial use for the property at 110 Ogden Avenue was presented for discussion. A second meeting was held to further discuss the proposal on August 21th.

The prospective buyers of this property, Guillermo and Luis Rodriguez of South Kearny are proposing to relocate their marble cutting shop to 110 Ogden Avenue. The current zoning is R-2 (residential, two family). An application for a use variance must be submitted to the City and the issue must be heard before the Board of Adjustment. No date has been set for the hearing.

The property is presently owned by Joe Mizzi, of Plainsboro, N.J. and the structure on it is a gound level 12-car garage with a single family residence situated on the second level. Currently, no cars are being stored or parked in the garage.

The proposed use would include a certain amount of marble and stone storage on the premises. The cutting and trimming of the marble tiles would be performed on Ogden Avenue.

The day to day operation of the business would require the use of a "flatbed" masonry truck (approximately 22 feet long) and a commercial van (approximately 20 feet long). These vehicles would be parked inside the garage shop at night. According to the prospective owners, a boom-type delivery truck (approximately 30 feet long) would make marble and stone deliveries to the shop "three or four times a month". The truck would park at the curbside and unload onto the driveway-sidewalk area of 110 Ogden. Then a forklift would transport the material inside the shop.

The Rodriguez brothers have stated that they will limit their hours of operation to 8AM to 5PM (possibly 7PM), Monday to Friday. They have also made assurances that "extra" sound insulation will be added to the walls and ceilings in the back of the shop to reduce the amount of sound transmission, when the cutting machines are operating, to the neighboring houses.

The concern of the residents in the immediate vicinity is the potential negative effect this operation

would have upon the primarily residential character of the neighborhood - specifically, the introduction of daily commercial traffic on our residential street. Another concern of a number of people has focused on the potential effect that this variance will have upon future proposals, either non-residential or large-scale residential, which do not comply with the established residential zoning.

RNA urges all members and friends to come to our next meeting and participate in the discussion about this project.

RENOVATION PLANS FOR RIVERVIEW PARK

On Tuesday, August 28,1990, Riverview Neighborhood Association will held a special meeting to vote on the City's plans to renovate Riverview Park (Project # 89-023). As we go to print, the Bureau of Architecture will publicly present these rehabilitation plans to the Planning board at their September 11th meeting.

Plans for renovation of our Park have been reviewed and discussed since the presentation of the initial plans at our February meeting by City architects Robert Cerchio and James Murray. At that time, the drastic changes proposed were overwhelmingly rejected by the membership (these included stone arches at each of the main entrances and redesigning the pathways of the park). The rehabilitation concerns only the portion of the Park between Palisade and Ogden Avenues and does not address the cliffside segment (except to renovate the basketball court). In June, the architects presented RNA with a revised plan which maintained the present layout of the Park. After long discussions at both the Planning and Development committee and the general meetings, it was decided to divide this project into categories and vote on them indiviidually. The following are the results of the membership vote on the renovation plan:

1) RNA voted No: against the City's proposal for a new underground drainage system (including larger catch basins/inlets, manholes and undeground pipes, which will connect to the existing system under Palisade Avenue) but would approve of an alternative drainage plan that would reposition the underground piping to avoid disturbing the trees and their root systems,

2) RNA voted Yes: for the installation of new underground electrical conduit and fifteen (15) light poles (which will be twenty-five feet tall and hold two cobra lighting fixtures each) but with the following two amendments: to reposition the location of underground conduit to avoid trees and their root systems and to use a less obtrusive bulb - preferably a mercury vapor,

3) RNA voted No: against the ripping up of the old pavement and installation of new cement sidewalks, but realizing the need for a new sidewalk would like the City to consider the following three alternatives: poured asphalt, asphalt block, or chemically treated concrete without a curb,

4) RNA voted No: against the cementing over of the dirt/grass islands along the curbs of Ogden and Palisade Avenues and Bowers Street and recommends that those areas be filled in with dirt and reseeded,

5) RNA voted No: against the building a larger children's playground on the Bower Street section of the Park (including two modular pieces of play equipment, a seating area for parents, and a four foot fence enclosing the area) but as an alternate proposal recommends that the present playground on Ogden Avenue be retained, traditional playground equipment be installed and the ground area be covered with a non-erodable natural surface,

6) RNA voted Yes: for the installation of benches throughout the Park but with the amendment that a more traditonal style of bench be used,

7) RNA voted No: against the removal of 12 trees with the strong recommendation that an independent professional be hired to evaluate and treat the diseased trees and that the plans be revised to avoid removing any of the healthy trees that presently interfere with the construction proposals,

8) RNA voted Yes: for the renovation of the center court, with the recommendation that a vandal-proof flagpole be installed and that the flag be lit so that it does not need to be lowered daily, ,

9) RNA voted Yes: for the renovation of the basketball court floor surface but there was a split vote on the need for new fencing to surround the court, and

10) RNA voted Yes: for the installation of four (4) foot high wrought iron fences around the two statues of Fiske and Hudson.

At the September RNA meeting, additional proposals not included in the City's plan for the Park will be voted on and included in the official position of the group to be presented to the Planning Board.

Note: Members of RNA have been meeting with independent tree experts to save the healthy trees in Riverview Park from their proposed removal designated in the City's renovation plans. During July, Dr. Sidney Greenfield, a botany professor from Rutgers University, toured the park and made suggestions about what trees should be saved and which ones should be removed because of disease. Dr. Greenfield's list was then presented to Rodney Hadley, Director of Parks and Forestry during a tour of the Park with residents. RNA is now in the process of receiving appraisals from qualified trees surgeons about the work of treating the diseased trees and estimates for this work to be done.

CONRAD'S CORNER

(This article is the opinion of Ted Conrad, the Historic Advisor for RNA. It does not reflect the offical position of the organization as listed above.)

The friends of Riverview Park and some members of the Riverview Neighborhood Association are very much opposed to plans for the rehabilitation of Riverview Park which RNA's park committee has submitted for review. We are definitely not excited about a larger playground on the Bowers Street end of the park which will bring down real estate values in this area as it did when a large playground almost ruined the southern end of the park.

When the playground was moved to a new and larger site on the southern end of the park, the fenced in area with an attendant, was constantly broken into and downgrading of the area began taking place until the playground was moved to its present site.

There is no need to do a scorched earth policy of upgrading Riverview Park, just asphalt sections of the paving where trucks have been allowed to run roughshod over walks and patch curbing. We don't need new lighting or drainage which will do extensive damage to the lawns and sidewalks. The expanse of green grass and beautiful eighty year old trees is idyllic now. Let's not chew it up just because the present drains weren't cleaned in years. They are always full of glass bottles which will happen again after a short time even if they are cleaned up because there are no maintenance men around to keep them clean.

What is most important is to fence in the pavilion with an 8 foot high galvanized steel fence with a set to gates similar to the fencing around Tumulty Park to close it off from graffiti artists and drug dealers. Concrete blocks with a circular hole design can be used instead of an expensive iron railing which will take forever to fabricate. This should be done before some child falls off the side of the pavilion and is killed. A similar fence should also be placed around the Henry Hudson Monument and the Soldiers' and Sailors' memorial on Bowers Street, these can be painted a light gray or red color to reduce their contrasting visibility.

Removal of the unnecessary tennis court fencing around the basketball court should be done to improve the view. Only two basketball backstops should remain as originally planned. They are enough, since most of the players according to Joan Earls come up from Hoboken.

A dead tree should be cut down next to the pavilion and trees growing up from the Plank Road now blocking out the view should be trimmed.

Pershing Field is a disaster. Let's not ruin Riverview Park, it is after all a Historic Park. It's paths are well designed and proportioned, the new design made with mechanical equipment will not be the same and if it is not maintained may look a lot worse than it does now.

We will be spending $400,000 and not even doing over the pavilion, the center piece of the park. From past experiences all these improvements without maintenance personnel will be throwing money down the drain all over again as we have done many times in the past.

The lighting which seems indirect is almost perfect, a few more lights on wooden poles can be added to light up any dark spots. We don't have to dig up the lawns for underground wiring.

The present playground with a few more horses for children will be enough playground equipment since there will be no attendant to supervise the area.

The large grass areas on the northern end of the park and southern end are now used by teen age boys to play ball, why not leave these areas alone. When the boys get through playing we have a nice open space lawn instead of vandalized playground equipment if fenced in playground is to be built on the site.

The $400,000 allocated for Riverview Park should be used to purchase the Van Wagenen House (Apple Tree House) instead as a State and National Historic site before it is sold to a developer and torn down.

Our own Van Vorst House at 531 Palisade Avenue, the oldest house in Hudson County, is also up for sale. We should use CDGB money to save it before we mull around in Riverview Park.

MOUNTAIN ROAD SHOULD BE REOPENED

(At the RNA meeting in August, a vote was taken to reaffirm the group's position to reopen the Mountain Road. The following is a letter to the City stating the reasons why it must be reopened.)

The RNA is writing the Mayor's office with an important request to reopen Mountain Road. Mountain Road is the cobblestoned street that runs from Ogden Avenue and Franklin Street to Hope Street and Patterson Plank Road. It has been closed officially since 1985. We ask that you reopen this road now because of problems of increased crime and the subsequent danger to the public welfare of the citizens in this area.

For the last year we have been plagued with street gangs in the area of Palisade Avenue and Franklin Street who have used this closed road as a "safety area" to escape police patrols, to hang out - drinking and doing drugs, to hide their illegal contraband and to transact drug deals. Recently, a local neighbor witnessed 35 excursions to the Mt. Road from Palisade Avenue, involving members of the street gangs, within a time frame of about an hour and half. There is also a noticeable increase of pedestrian traffic of questionsable character from the Hoboken projects constantly using the road to get to Palisade Avenue. Within the last six weeks an apartment building, at 164 Ogden Avenue (whose back overlooks the Mt. Road), has had two break-in attempts and one succesful robbery of over $10,000. worth of possessions (with the culprits escaping down the Mountain Road). Properties whose rear face the old dirt road behind Ogden Avenue (from Griffith to Franklin Streets) have also been plagued with break-ins and harrassment from hodlums who use the closed road as an escape route when the police are called. The Harbor View Health Care Center, which is situated on the corner of Ogden and Franklin, has a large and vulnerable population of senior citizens and indigents which are also seriously affected by this crime problem.

The problem is compounded because the police cannot patrol the Mountain Road or its surrounding area

at all due to the highway barriers preventing their patrol cars from traveling on the road. The street lighting of PSEG has been "mysteriously" broken, so again there is no means to monitor the road at all from the surrounding properties. Coupled with the overgrown vegetation spilling onto the road, this area has become a "no-man's land" where the alleged criminals have a free rein.

RNA has already contacted the Engineering Department (who is responsible for renovating the road) and the Division of Traffic Engineering (who is responsible for the reopening of the street). They have asked that RNA, as an organization, discuss the issue with our members and formally write them a letter to notify them of our problem and request. At our August 14th meeting, RNA reaffirmed our original position to reopen the Mountain Road by a majority vote. We write to your office, so that this request will be addressed within a timely and realistic framework.

RNA would appreciate a letter of confirmation from your office. We would like to meet with the two Engineering Depts., as soon as possible, to begin discussion on the subsequent issues to be ironed out concerning the reopening of this road. The issues that need to be discussed are:

1) making the road a one-way street (preferably from west to east),
2) excluding all trucks and heavy vehicles - cars only,
3) the possibility of reopening Holland Street (another cobblestoned road, north of Mountain Road, at the corner of Bowers Street and Palisade Avenue) to facilitate one way traffic from west to east,
4) the issue of the road surface (the desire ot retain the cobblestones),
5) additional lighting to insure safety for vehicular and pedestrian traffic,
6) new retaining walls and fences at the cliff edge, and
7) landscaping the vegetation and trees.

All of these requests are based on the obvious but sometimes forgotten duty of the City to properly maintain the streets and provide effective police patrols to protect the local community.

(As we go to press, we have not received any reply from the City.)

EPA TARGETS TOXIC DUMP ON RAVINE ROAD

In September, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will issue an adminstrative order to M. Monck and Pasquale, the owners of the property on Ravine Road, to clean up the toxic waste dump on their land. The site, where the Ideal Cooperage company was formerly located, was used for restoring old industrial drums. Although the company is long gone, barrels containing heavy metals and other hazardous materials still sit on the land - some broken and leaking their contents into the local environment. The Agency also issued another measure to allow them to use superfund monies to clean up the site, if the owners fail to comply with the first order.

PLEASE KEEP OUR STREETS CLEAN!

(The following is a letter to the City complaining about the sanitation problem on Palisade Avenue. It was addressed to the Mayor's office.)

This City is a pig sty. Living in this City is like living with people who have never been taught to exercise the least amount of self control when it comes to keeping their community clean. The litter, debris, garbage, refuse, whatever you deem to label it fills our sidewalks, streets, parks, and homes to the point where you cannot avoid looking at it, stepping on it or thinking about it. The attempts to clean up a block are the exception to the rule, not the pervailing law. The attempt of the "clean communities" program to change the ideas and habits of the people, is a disappointment. As usual, they are only preaching to the converted, not to the people that are the real target of the program.

The strip of Palisade Avenue from Cuneo Place to Bowers Street is a microscosm of the problem. The streets and sidewalks are always in a constant state of garbage and debris. The store and property owners are not sweeping or are not sweeping enough. The multi-family houses are not providing areas for garbage storage between collections: when a tenant has a bag of garbage, he/she takes it out and dumps it in front of their or someone else's building. This happens most every day- day and night -creating a health and safety problem for the people who work and live here. The building superintendents, if there are any, never seem to be able to clean their sidewalks or maintain the garbage of their properties. Of course, the owners , if they even live here, don't seem to care about the problem and it seems as if they are only interested in extracting their rents.

The city agency that is responsible for the enforcement of the sanitation laws seems to be overwhelmed by the task, despite all its efforts. It is the job of the Sanitation Division of the Department of Public Works to monitor, enforce and ticket the violators of the sanitation laws of the City. They are doing their job to the best of their abilities. I can personally testify to this fact having worked extensively with Inspector Ray Spellmeyer in the last few years: sometimes, where the two of us have actually driven or walked around the neighborhood of Ogden and Palisade Avenues together. He surveys a problem area, warns the owners, or tenants, and if necessary writes a summons for a violation. Mr Spellmeyer is a dedicated and hard working inspector. I have also seen him in action at the municipal court. It just seems that no matter what he or his colleagues do, the problem remains. From our perspective, it looks like what is really needed is more support from the City Administration, in terms of money and more inspectors.

Yes, in a perfect world, we would not have to act like parents and treat our citizens like children, but certain people must be made to understand what their

unsanitiary habits are doing to our neighorhoods. If they don't obey the laws, then they must be punished. Experience has shown that it is not good enough to ticket a building or a store once, if the transgressor is violating the law every week. Write a ticket every week until the problem is arrested. If it is the tenant of a building that is creating the problem, the owner will rectify the problem as soon as possible if they receive five or six tickets in one month. The judges in the court should also be told to show no mercy to these people: enforce the law by fining them the maximum amounts and then give them community service to clean up the mess.

Another suggestion would be to have more inspectors patrolling the neighborhood streets more of the time- that means evenings and weekends too. It is during these two times that the majority of sanitation problems are created. The Director of the DPW has stated that the sanitation division was going to hire more inspectors and create a nighttime schedule to have more inspectors on the streets more of the time. Again, what we are asking for is a commitment from the City to provide the necessary manpower and financial support to clean up our neighborhoods. We are aware of the financial situation and the budgetary restraints, but enlarging this desperately needed service, would probably pay for itself, in the resulting fines that would be collected from violators. In addition, it would send out a message to the citizens of the City that we will not tolerate filth or garbage on our streets or sidewalks anymore.

The warm weather is upon us and summer is here, what is is going to take to get control of the streets and parks of our entire City? A good start is to aggressively attack this sanitation and litter problem. The City is always looking for good public relations with it's citizens- well, here it is: show them that their community can be clean and safe and healthy to walk in. It is not hard to do because the City has all the necessary laws and appropriate personnel to acomplish this goal. The citizens will be amazed and will be quite appreciative and feel that the City is beginning to work for them again. That's not to much to ask is it?

(Since this letter was sent, a night time inspector has toured Palisade Avenue and the Incinerator Authority installed receptacles on the Avenue.)

WHERE'S OUR MAIL?

(In July, it was decided to invite officals of the Jersey City Post Office to our August meeting, to discuss the problems with mail delivery in our neighborhood. The following letter was addressed to Glenda McDaniel Ferguson, Postmaster of Jersey City.)

Riverview Neighborhood Association is a large community organization located in Jersey City Heights. We have been in existence since 1984. We publish a monthly newsletter which is mailed through your bulk mailing facility to over 450 people in Jersey City and throughout the state. Our boundaries are Ogden And Palisade Avenues to the east and west and Bowers Street to the north and Cuneo Place to the south. Our carrier routes are primarily #18 and #9.

The reason we are writing to your office is that there is a recurring problem with the delivery of our mail that has gotten out of hand. Our members have tried on numerous occassions to talk to either the local Hudson City Post Office officials or the Montgomery P. O. officials to correct the problem. All this effort to no avail. The problem in a nut shell is that the mail delivery is not consistent: it is either delivered very late in the day, sometimes it is not delivered at all (this has been verified by your workers) and the delivery person is always different. This has caused serious problems for all of our residents who are either expecting important mail or checks.

The people we have contacted in the Hudson City P.O. have been Hector Sambolin (manager of the carriers), Bobby Allen (assistant to Mr. Sambolin), and Jack Kane (general manager of the branch). We have also talked to Mr. Defaio of the Main P.O. They have all been very nice and cooperative, but nothing has been done to correct the problem. They have explained to us that the route is too large for one person and that there is nothing they can do to change it. They keep telling us it must be changed from Newark.

We would like a explanation from your office about the status of the problem and what is being done to rectify it. We would appreciate having someone like yourself, in a position of authority attend our meeting and also another person from the local branch who knows of the problem first hand. We are tired of the excuses and promises. Several members of our group wanted to contact Newark and Washington immediately, but the majority felt it only appropriate that we contact your office first, and allow you to try and solve this problem locally .

COMMUNITY UPDATES

TEEN NATION: Fortunately, the folks located in the vicinity of the junction of State Highway and Palisade Ave. have only had one major land use battle to fight each year! Last year it was the Christ Hospital 600 car parking garage -- which was to be a pleasing six stories high. This year it is Teen Nation, the disco billed as a recreation center for youth. While everyone would like the "youth" off the street and in a wholesome place of their own, Teen Nation is not the answer. Activities structured for young people are difficult to achieve and require a great deal of supervision. An adult style disco, complete with two bars, a full sound system and light show have consistently resulted in drug use and violence. We do not think this will be different. Therefore, the residents of the area have filed an appeal to the City's determination that the proposed disco is permitted in the zone in which it resides. This appeal has resulted in many appearances in court and one of what appears to be many 6-hour appearances before the Jersey City Zoning Board of Adjustment. One may wonder why this matter is not only before the Zoning Board and why the Superior Court is involved. The simple explanation is that Teen Nation is very anxious to

open and has started appealing their case to the Courts even before the Zoning Board has had a chance to act. Therefore, to some extent, neither the Board nor the Court can do their jobs because they are busy reacting to one another.

The present status of the project is that it is not allowed to open because it does not have a Dance Hall Permit or a Certificate of Occupancy. It is the latter approval that the residents are attempting to block. The issue is whether the old Wilson Carpet Warehouse can be converted into a disco. Several questions arise in addition to the appropriateness of the proposed use in the C-2 zone in which the building is located. The other questions concern parking, noise, various technical zoning regulations, safety and landscaping. Although the issue is complex the City originally gave its blessing to the project and only after the residents formally complained did the public hearings start. Interestingly enough, even at the hearings the Zoning Board and the Court have been reluctant to let the entire issue come to light. Hearings have been held on very narrow questions. For instance, at a hearing on June 14, 1990, the only evidence presented was on the issue of whether the residents presented a timely appeal. This question was decided affirmatively, but rather than hear the merits of the appeal, the Board decided to side step and transfer the case to another administrative body called the Planning Board. The Court has directed that the case be remanded to the Zoning Board for a hearing as to the use and whether or not the Planning Board should review the proposed project. The "use" question involves whether the disco is a nightclub and prohibited by the zoning ordinance, or a recreation facility and permitted. Naturally, many things can be considered recreation, and not all such activities are automatically permitted. Planning Board approval is required of large projects which involve new construction, rehabilitation or additions. The problem is that this hearing will still not completely address the residents' appeal. In any event, the hearing is scheduled for the evening of Thursday, September 6, 1990. We would appreciate everyone's attendance and would like to hear from people bold enough to appear as expert witnesses in this proceeding.

ROBERT DUVAL

(Mr. DuVal is the attorney representing the community in the Teen Nation dispute.)

CHRIST HOSPITAL: Last year at this time many of the residents from the Christ Hospital neighborhood formed a group called Protect Our Palisades Assn. This was done in response to the Hospital's proposal before the Jersey City Planning Board that they be allowed to construct a 6-story parking garage hanging out over the palisades. In addition, Christ Hospital wanted to build another medical office building. Residents were alarmed at the scope and offensive nature of the project. It appeared to be rather "ad hoc" and without thorough planning. The hospital finally withdrew its proposal. Nevertheless, the hospital still maintains that is requires parking and additional office/medical space. In an effort to garner community support as opposed to contempt, Christ Hospital has taken several steps to involve the community in its planning. The hospital started to publish a newsletter, invited the community to use its facilities, and has placed a member of the Protect Our Palisades Assn. on its Board Committee for Building.

One thing is apparent. The hospital has not grown in accord with any discernible master plan. What looks like one hospital is really a conglomeration of different buildings with connecting passageways. The interior is very clean and attractive, but from an operating standpoint it must be difficult. Also, expansion is difficult and almost senseless without contemplating a future goal. Parking is "nice" and probably would answer some of the immediate complaints from employees and patients. However, parking is not the answer to all or even to the largest of the hospital's problems and one wonders at what point the real difficulties of the building will impede the safe and efficient operation of the hospital.

Several options are available. A completely new hospital could be erected on currently owned hospital property. If the hospital doesn't have enough land then they could try to purchase adjacent properties or have the City condemn the land and force its sale to the hospital. Another option involves moving the hospital to another site, such as the reservoir. The gradual approach would involve continuing the current practice of building small additional structures. It should be emphasized that we have not yet attended a meeting of the hospital's committee, and there are not known plans to do any of the above.

ROBERT DUVAL

(Mr. DuVal is a member of the Protect Our Palisades Association who is also the community person appointed to the Hospital's Building Committee.)

HEIGHTS COALITION OF BLOCK AND NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS: The June 24 Coalition meeting's intended speaker, Mr. Mark Munley, could not attend. In his stead, Council President Roman attended. In the rather stormy meeting that followed, Mrs. Roman was asked about local Heights issues: Reservoirs 1 & 2, the proposed Police and Fire Station, the Pershing Field grandstand plans, and the Ward D Councilman. There were also questions about citywide issues, including the city budget, the new tax rate, the expenditure of CDBG funds, abatements and the like. Mrs. Roman was rather put off by the "hostile" nature of the coalition membership, but presented herself well.

The July 9th Coalition meeting had Mark Munley as its guest speaker. (Reservoir #2 Neighborhood Association permitted the Coalition to piggyback within its own general meeting.) Munley, the Director of the Housing and Economic Development agency tried to limit the questioning concerning the Reservoirs #2 and #3. One important quote was..."no development [*in the reservoir site*] will be undertaken for at least a year because of the slow housing market..." Many of Munley's answers seemed vague. He was also questioned about sections of the recently passed $44 million Bond Ordinance that pertained to the proposed police/fire facility. Munley suggested setting up three committees to begin an ongoing dialogue with our

community : one committee to meet with the Water Department, another to meet about the proposed police/fire facility and a last committee to meet with HED representatives and discuss general Heights issues. During the meeting other questions arose about tax abatements, the proposed transfer of residential abatement power to HED and Fox Lance abatements. Overall, the meeting revealed nothing new, but it was a hopeful sign that an opening dialogue with the City would begin.

The July 23 Coalition meeting was preoccupied with the drawing for the executive positions of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer from the member associations. The following associations were chosen to serve: Leonard Gordon as Chair, Beacon Avenue as Vice-Chair, Pershing Field as Secretary, and Riverview as Treasurer. At the next meeting on the 24th of August, the one year term of these four positions will officially begin. There was also a report from the committee that met with the Water Dept. and Mark Munley.

On August 21, Business Administrator Fred Tompkins met with another committee to discuss the police and fire facility proposed for one of the reservoirs. He stated there were no formal plans as of yet because the City is waiting for the recommendations of the Oppenheimer report, started in the spring, which was evaluating the entire reservoir site.

LOUIS De STEFANO

COALITION FOR A BETTER WATERFRONT: On July 10, 1990, Hoboken voters rejected the City's deal with the Port Authority to develop a massive project on the city-owned property at the southern waterfront. The project called for 3.2 million square feet of residential and commercial space, with residential towers rising up to 20 stories high along River street and commercial towers up to 33 stories high on Pier A. The Coalition for a Better Waterfront, who opposed the project, based their successful campaign on the excessive scale of the plan, the poor financial deal struck with the PA and the lack of open public space and affordable housing.

The required signatures were obtained by petition last winter to place this issue before Hoboken voters. The City of Hoboken spent over $89,000 in legal fees to prevent the referendum vote but lost in unanimous decisions before the Appellate Division of Superior Court and the New Jersey Supreme Court. The July 10 vote witnessed a record turnout for a special election with 8,824 votes cast.

The Coalition for a Better Waterfront is now working with a group of professionals, including architects, planners and engineers, to come up with an alternate plan for the City's southern waterfront. The need to develop the alternate plan is based on fundamental differences which still exist between the City and residents who defeated the plan. According to CBW spokesman, Ron Hine, "the City is still looking for up-front money from the PA to alleviate their current fiscal crisis. We are looking for a project that will be appropriate for Hoboken and the region for the next 100 years. This requires more open space, limited development, and more amenities for Hoboken residents."

Municipal employees, led by Police and Fire Unions, are currently petitioning the Court to overturn the referendum vote, now that the Mayor has begun layoffs and demotions. The City of Hoboken spent $7 million of the Port Authority's money for last year's budget and had spent millions of dollars anticipated this year, despite the fact that a potential negative referendum vote would eliminate that source of revenue.

RON HINE

(Ron Hine is an member of the Coalition for a Better Waterfront.)

HOBOKEN'S PROPOSED SLUDGE GASIFIER: A sludge gasifier/incinerator can now be built in Hoboken. However, some questions can still be asked, like, "Will it be built?" and "What can be built in its place?" and "What can I do?" These recent events of the last few months might well answer some of these questions. Also, your acting on this information could lead to a possible solution.

On May 18, 1990, the NJDEP issued the final air quality permit to the Hoboken-Union City-Weehawken Sewerage Authority (Tri-City Sewerage Authority) for the 100 foot high gasifier incinerator located at the base of the Palisade Cliffs near 16th Street.

The Tri-City Authority refuses to sign off on the construction permit issued to Terminal Construction Company, the company building the incinerator. Terminal Construction Company sues Tri-City Authority and Tri-City Authority countersues claiming that a solid waste managment permit is needed from the State.

On June 7, 1990, the Greenpeace Environmental Group demonstrates before City Hall in Hoboken and a petition drive commences again against the incinerator.

In June, Daniel Gutman, a physicist and an air quality specialist working for local environmental groups determines that the NJDEP air quality model was seriously flawed and not thorough.

On July 2, 1990, a Notice of Appeal was filed in the Appelate Court in Trenton against the NJDEP by Susan O"Kane for capriciously and arbitrarily issuing the permit.

On August 22, Superior court Judge Dorothea Wefing, ruling in favor of Terminal Construction, states that the sludge incinerator can be built without a solid waste management permit.

By September 30, 1990, an application, called a 201 Plan, will be submitted to the NJDEP by the Tri-City Sewerage Authority for a beneficial alternative to the gasifier. Both Richard Wolff and Robert Ranieri, the Chairman and Executive Director, respectively of the Tri-City Sewerage Authority continue to assure the local citizens of the schedule and that their engineering

consultants, CH2 M Hill Company, are assessing the alternatives and preparing the application.

Citizens concerned about the air quality of our area should:

1) Sign the Petition directed to Tri-City & the Hudson County Utilities Authority
2) Call the executives of Tri-City: Executive Director Robert Ranieri (201-420-2058 or 963-7025) and Chairman Richard Wolff (212-593-2655)
3) Call Assemblymen Robert Menendez and Bernard Kenny
4) Contribute money to help pay for the lawyers & physicist.

SUSAN O'KANE

(Susan O'Kane is a member of the Pollution Crisis Coalition.)

WATERFRONT TRANSPORTATION PROJECT: NJ Transit's Hudson River Waterfront Transportation Office is seeking a grant from the federal government to finance the short term transit needs of the commercial, residential and retail complexes on the northern New Jersey Waterfront. U. S. Sen. Frank Lautenberg has earmarked $25 million in the federal government's Fiscal Year 1991 budget to help finance the short term needs, which are estimated at more than $40 million to implement. The plan focuses on construction of the interim Waterfront Transitway: a north-south road for exclusive use by buses, which starts in the vicinity of Liberty State Park in Jersey City in Hudson County and extends to Gorge Road in Edgewater in Bergen County.

The main components of this interim transitway are a series of bus-only and bus preferential roads connecting at both ends with the existing North Busway, which runs from the intersection of Hillside Avenue and River Road in West New York to 19th Street at Lincoln Harbor in Weehawken, on a privately built roadway. This would provide a continuous 7.5 mile route devoted, in part, exclusively to public transportation. This special treatment for public transit fills a gap in the transit network because fast, continuous north-south transit routes along the Hudson River Waterfront, particularly from Exchange Place to lower Bergen County, are non-existent. By linking the various development sites along the Waterfront into one transit route, commuters heading south from North Hudson and lower Bergen County would have a quality bus trip extending to the Waterfront's commercial core in downtown Jersey City. Similarly, commuters from South Hudson to the Lincoln Harbor complex in Weehawken would benefit from improved transit.

This transitway, for local buses only, would initially use existing streets along the water's edge of Hoboken- River Street, Frank Sinatra Drive and Hudson Street to 14th Street. To avoid using the heavily-congested local streets in northeastern Hoboken, near the 14th Street viaduct, the Waterfront Transportation Office is considering the possibility of obtaining an easement required for a transitway alignment on private property north of 14th Street to Lincoln Harbor.

[OPINION: While this all sounds great - improving the ability of commuters to travel north and south along the watefront more efficiently - the local communities are very concerned about what this "quality bus trip" will do to the local streets and communities. The citizens that have participated in the NJ Transit's Alternate Analysis process have had one common theme: do not drive anymore buses through our local communites because we are already overwhelmed by the air pollution from the traffic of the two tunnels now. The local communities are breathing the exhaust of all the commuter buses and cars from elsewhere on their way to the waterfront or New York City. Again, a common theme from these citizen representatives has been to develop an environmentally clean public transit system that will not adverely effect our neighborhoods: either a light rail system or, more realistically, Ted Conrad's plan to use existing rail lines to run commuter trains.]

Another important development concerning this Waterfront Transportation Project is that the NJ Department of Environmental Protection is now conducting a two-month air quality monitoring study for carbon monoxide in Hudson County along the Hudson River Waterfront.

Also, NJ Transit, with the assistance of the NJ Department of Transportation should be placing three air monitoring receptors at critical intersections within the next month. They will be measuring our existing air quality for carbon monoxide. This information data will be used to validate the NJ Transit computer air model studies and to estimate the possibility of adverse effects from the planned transportation improvements scheduled to be built along our Hudson River Waterfront.

BUS TRIP

Our membership has proposed a purely social outing in the form of a bus trip to Atlantic City. Tentative dates for this trip are Nov. 4th or Nov. 11th. As soon as details are available, we will inform you. A complete package should be ready by our September meeting. You may call 659-2245 after 5 p.m. for any questions.

CONGRATULATIONS

to Mrs. Marie Tuzzo who celebrated her 75th birthday on June 18th.

to Mr. & Mrs. L. DeStefano on the birth of their daughter, Chynna Christine on July 14th.

to Javier Rodriguez on becoming a member of the U. S. team for the International Friendship Games. We wish him and the rest of his team success.

HOSPITAL NEWSLETTER

In their recent newsletter, "News for Our Neighbors",

Christ Hospital announced several items of interest:

a) Christ Hospital's Child Care Center is scheduled to open by late September. They already have about 70 children enrolled. For more information call 795-8358.

b) Cholesterol and Blood Pressure Screenings will take place on 9/13 between 1 and 6:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required and there is a $5 laboratory fee. Call 795-8030.

c) Prostate Screens will be offered free the week of 9/16 to all male residents over 40. Call 795-8030.

d) Eye Screenings will be held for residents over 35 on 9/27 from 1 to 3 p.m. on a first come-first served basis. 795-8030.

Medical information is available thru their Center for Health Awareness at 795-8030 Monday thru Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Staffed by three full-time registered nurses, they offer a variety of health education programs, health screens and support groups. This personal touch service replaces the Tel-Med tapes. For more information, call 795-8030.

JERSEY CITY MUSEUM

The Jersey City Museum at 472 Jersey Avenue is presenting "From the Permanent Collection", selections including 19th and 20th century paintings, watercolors, prints, historical objects and artifacts. THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND AN OPENING RECEPTION ON WEDNESDAY, 9/12 FROM 5:30 TO 8:00 p.m.

Highlights include a recently conserved photograph by 20th century Jersey City photographer William Armbruster. The heart of the collection consists of about 300 works documenting the industrialization of Jersey City between 1850 and 1910. A selection of these works will be included in this exhibition. Also included will be examples of historical documents, colonial household objects, Native American artifacts, 19th century ceramics as well as contemporary art.

The following craft classes are also available through the Museum. Pre-registration is required. Please call 547-4580 for more information.

1) Quilting (intermediate & advanced)
   4 classes -Saturdays 1-3 p.m.
   9/8 & 22, 10/6 & 13 $20

2) Knitting (beg. $25) (int. $20)
   5 classes (beg) starting 9/15
   4 classes (int) starting 9/22
   Sat. 10 a.m. to 12 noon

3) Drawing from the Landscape $20
   4 classes, 10 a.m. -12-30 p.m.
   9/8, 15, 22 and 10/6

Office of Advocacy for the Handicapped

Legislation establishing clear guidelines and penalties related to the use and abuse of parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities became effective June 1st. Fines for parking illegally in a space reserved for people with disabilities will be raised to $100.

NHS COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION/GREENING PROGRAM

(This article was reprinted from the Hudson Dispatch - written by Sebastian D'Elia .)

Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc. wants to transform vacant lots into community gardens and parks and to line city streets with flower barrels in the Heights and Bergen-Lafayette sections through a proposed $90,000 neighborhood beautification plan.

According to the proposal, NHS hopes a greener city will "create" opportunities for the people to experience how different the neighborhood feels when people are outside working in their yards, talking to each other - in short, being neighbors."

Under the plan, each block would be charged a $25 registration fee. Residents would pay $2.50 to use space in a flower box or barrel, along with 10 cents for each plant they grow. Each block would form self-governing garden clubs with 4 or 5 head gardeners and about 20 to 30 members.

The proposal would have to be approved by the City Council, since the NHS is seeking federal Community Development Block Grant funds that the city controls.

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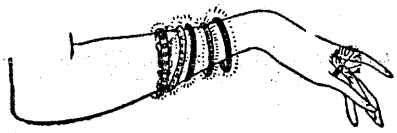

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ENVIRONMENT
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REMINDERS:

1) RNA MEETING:
TUESDAY, September 11 at7:30 PM
AT THE HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER

2) PLANNING BOARD MEETING:
TUESDAY, September 18 at 5:00 PM
CITY HALL: RENOVATION PLANS FOR RIVERVIEW PARK